



BriefCASE

A legislative and advocacy newsletter
from The Colorado Association of School Executives

Governor's 2023-24 budget proposal includes solid investments in K-12

Yesterday, November 1, Governor Polis released his budget request for the 2023-24 fiscal year, which unofficially marks the start of the months-long negotiation process among lawmakers on the state budget. While K-12 continues to be underfunded and is an ongoing top area of CASE's advocacy efforts, we recognize the Governor's continued work to prioritize it.

Funding for K-12, early childhood education and higher education comprise the greatest single area of the proposal. Specific elements to highlight related to public education include:

- **Increase in per pupil spending by about \$861/student, representing approximately a 9% increase.** The primary driver of this high increase is the inflation rate and is a \$704 million investment in Total Program.
- **Buy down of the budget stabilization factor of \$35 million, to 3% of Total Program. This would be the lowest the budget stabilization factor has been in fourteen years.**
 - The budget stabilization factor is essentially the amount of money that the state has held back from giving to districts. It was put in place when the recession and budget pressures caused the state to not be able to meet the K-12 funding obligations it was legally required to under law.
 - The Governor's budget request includes a provision for a two-year strategy to further reduce the budget stabilization factor over time.
- **\$29 million in increased special education funding.** CASE is pleased to see special education prioritized right out of the gate. As you know, we have prioritized this funding area in recent years as it impacts all school districts, and are especially appreciative of the Consortium of Special Education

Directors for their partnership in this area. We will continue to monitor the shortfall of SPED funding for districts and push strongly for additional support.

- **\$8.4 million for school safety measures.** Specifically, this would include:
 - \$6 million in grants for physical safety improvements to schools and classrooms (i.e. door locks and entrance systems)
 - \$300,000 for expansion of threat assessment training for schools
 - \$2.1 million to create a new Office of School Safety, a “one-stop shop” for districts to get resources and funding for safety measures
- **\$340 million for the first year of universal preschool.** The bulk of this--\$325 million—would be to cover preschool tuition beginning in August 2023, and the remaining amount would be for the creation of new preschool classrooms and bonuses for providers participating in the universal preschool program. The majority of this funding comes from Proposition EE.
- **\$1 million for new resources for school improvement,** targeted at helping schools get off the accountability clock more quickly.
- **\$7 million increase for Charter School Institute mill levy equalization**

CASE is pleased to have such a strong starting point with the state budget and appreciate the Governor’s proposed increases to K-12. One area not included in the request is the BEST Program, which we know is of critical importance to many districts. CASE will be ready to strongly advocate for funding to that program once the 2023 legislative session kicks off. Again, this is just the first step in a process of creating a state budget that will span months, and we should expect changes.

Watch for more budget updates from CASE, including on the next revenue forecast, which will occur in early December.

Learn more:

[Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Request Letter from Jared Polis](#) (November 1, 2022)

2022-23 CASE Legislative Committee meetings

We hope you'll mark your calendar to join us for the meetings of our CASE Legislative Committee, which are held via Zoom unless otherwise noted. All CASE members are invited and encouraged to attend! They provide a great opportunity to hear directly from our CASE lobbyist and Legislative Committee chairs about the latest legislative issues impacting K-12, and give you the chance to ask questions and share your input.

Please email CASE Deputy Executive Director Melissa Gibson at mgibson@co-case.org if you wish to be added to these meeting invitations that include the Zoom link.

- Thursday, December 15, 2022: 1pm to 3pm, Location TBD.

- Friday, January 6, 2023: 1:30pm to 4pm
- Friday, January 20, 2023: 1:30pm to 4pm
- Friday, February 3, 2023: 12pm to 2pm
- Thursday, February 23, 2023: 1:30pm to 4pm at the Embassy Suites in Loveland immediately following the conclusion of the CASE Winter Leadership Conference.
- Friday, March 24, 2023: 1:30pm to 4pm
- Friday, April 14, 2023: 1:30pm to 4pm
- Friday, April 28, 2023: 10:30am to 12pm

